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Idyls of Old New England





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"THE RUGGED MOUNTAIN CHAINS."

Idyls of Old New England

By
Clarence Hawkes.

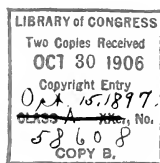
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NORTHAMPTON, MASS.

1897.



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DEDICATED

TO MY

ESTEEMED FRIEND,

MR. JOSEPH B. GLOVER,

IN RECOGNITION OF HIS LONG SERVICE IN THE

CAUSE OF THE BLIND, AND HIS DEVOTION

TO MY ALMA MATER.

PROEM.

THE TEST OF LIVING.

If I have loved and striven for the race
Before God's throne I shall not hide my face;
But if my life hath centered in its own
At that stern glance my heart will turn to stone.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE name of Clarence Hawkes has often been found of late in our best papers and magazines, associated with poems that interpret life with those magic words that spring from the heart.

His first volume of poems, "Pebbles and Shells," published some two years ago, contained sonnets that may be classed among the beautiful things of the language. A volume of children's verses, "Three Little Folks," followed soon after this work, and lovers of true poetry began to ask about the life and experience of one whose work represented such beauty in the expression both of the inner life and its outward forms.

The public was surprised to learn that the writer was at that time scarcely more than a youth, and that he was blind. In the beautiful things that he was giving to the world, he was a follower of Blackmore and several of the minor poets of England and Scotland, who, with lost or impaired vision, had yet the clearest intuitive sight.

Clarence Hawkes was not born blind. His sight was destroyed by an accident after he had for some twelve years enjoyed the vision of the flower-strewn earth and the starlit sky. The shutting out of the scenes of nature opened the eye of his spiritual sense and imagination, and enabled him

to see visions hidden to the material eye. It gave to him the rare gift of the sympathetic sense.

He was born in the hill country of New England, near the Connecticut valley, rich in historic legend and lore. To him the founders of New England were prophets, and he came to love the spirit of the prophets of the Mayflower, men whom Macaulay says, "God sifted the nations of the earth to find." To New England heroism, to the hills, streams, and home life of that portion of his native land, he has devoted the following pages. He has sought to do what Burns so simply did with a master hand in his "Cotter's Saturday Night." Such work as this is near to the people's hearts; in such poems the old home, its elms, its purple swifts, its flaming orioles, its orchards, meadows, and graves, and all the sacred habitude of social and domestic affection come back again. We hear in these poems the long gone voices of childhood; the natural story-teller lives again, the pine logs light the hearth, and the tales of the heroes of old cause a hush to fall on the candle-lighted room. But it is the simplest forms of the hardy life of the New England pioneers that make the picture most touching and true. The old oaken bucket, the red schoolhouse, the birds whose home was in the dooryard trees, the ancient clock, the wayside orchards, the guidepost,—in such pictures his volume is happy; the incidents appear that make Old New England live again.

There are patriotism and sacred influence in such work, and

the public may well bless and make prosperous the pen that brings out of the past such memories. We hope that a great number of readers may take this "Blind Poet of New England" to their hearts, and his books into their homes, and that he whose work relights again the hearthstones of our fathers may find a place by the hearths of the descendants of the Pilgrims, with all those who love the service of liberty, justice, and truth, as England and Scotland have cherished the work of like poets of hidden gifts and visions.

HEZEKIAH BUTTERWORTH,

28 Worcester St., Boston.

August 17, 1897.





"AIN'T WE FRIENDS?"



"HANDS THAT TOIL."

GOD IN NATER.

The further off we humans git
From nater an' her sod,
The further off we air from truth
An' holiness an' God.

HANDS THAT TOIL.

I ain't ashamed because my hands are rough,
The world 'ud starve ef it wa'n't for our farms,
It ain't no sign the heart inside is tough
Because the signs o' toil are on yer palms.

LOVE AND LABOR.

A little saved by hard and patient toil
Is worth an empire gotten as a spoil,
For labor savoreth the poor man's meat,
And love makes bread and water wondrous sweet.

EARTH'S ANGELS.

I hold this true, ter be an angel fair
Up yonder where they don't hev no despair,
Ain't half so big as 'tis ter be a man
Down on this earth where you must toil an' plan.

HEARTS ARE TRUMPS.

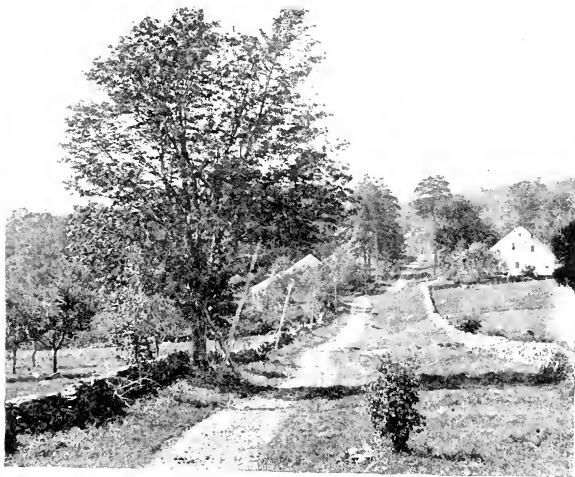
When eddycation makes a man
Git so eternal wise
That he can't bear to walk about
In ordinary guise,
When he must wear a stovepipe hat
Ter keep his idees in,—
It seems ter me that larnin' is
A folly an' a sin.

I see the college chaps in town
A swellin' round in style,
A lookin' mighty dandified,
As though they knew a pile;
An' then I read when I git hum
O' how they've done some trick
That would have put ter shame the brains
O' any lunatic.

An' then sometimes I see them all
A marchin' up an' down,
With nightdresses an' nightcaps on—
They call um "cap an' gown";

An' some o' um go in for sports,
An' some go in for canes;
It makes you feel real sorrowful
That more don't try for brains.

My notion is that heart an' head
Should both be uniform,
That when the head is made more wise
The heart should git more warm;
An' eddycation should not make
A man stuck up so far
That he would turn his nose up at
His daddy or his ma.



"WHEN I GIT HUM."

IDYLS OF OLD NEW ENGLAND.

For " hearts are trumps," that's what I say,
An' though your head is full,
In heaven they won't take account
O' what is 'neath your wool;
An' ain't that jest about the size
O' what the world complains?
It wants for love an' tenderness
More than it lacks for brains.

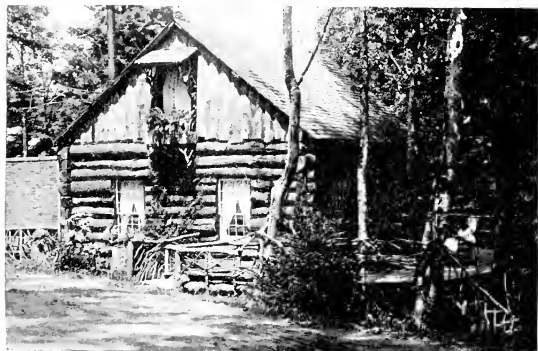
THE PILGRIM FATHERS.

When I see modern gals an' boys
Not seem to know or care
About the Pilgrims an' their deeds,
It fills me with despair,
An' other feelin's that I guess
Perhaps I'd better hide,
For 'tis a tender spot with me,—
The Pilgrims are my pride.

An' this I hold as mighty sure—
The further we depart
From those stern-hearted Puritans,
Although we think we're smart,
The further off we'll git from right,
An' all that's brave an' true,
For they were made o' God's best ash,
Ef they were rather blue;

They were the embryo an' seed
From which our nation sprung,
An' our true metal of them came,
From out their hardship wrung;
It makes my heart grow big inside
An' makes my cheek git warm,
Ter think how grand they lived an' died
That winter in the storm.

What principle their brave lives held—
It makes our own look sick,
When half our statesmen are a lie,
A livin' by a trick;
What love there wuz in them log huts
That faults cannot condemn—
It makes me feel our mansions are
But hovels side o' them.



“WHAT LOVE THERE WUZ IN THEM LOG HUTS!”

IDYLS OF OLD NEW ENGLAND.

They lived for freedom an' for truth,
In love they sought this sod;
We live for culture and for art—
Which is the most ter God?
We cannot all be heroes grim,
But we can all be men;
Let us git back the Pilgrim love
For simple truth again.

THE OLD MAN'S BURDEN.

When in his hour the old man falls asleep,
In rounded years and ripe in heart and brain,
Why do the tears above him fall like rain
And all of his beloved for him weep?
Is he not glorified in this last sleep?
What grief can break his heart or mad his brain
Now he is dead? Has he not burst the chain
That galled his hands? Is he not in God's keep?
Life's jungle was so matted and so deep,
With such dark pitfalls for his weary feet
And such a labyrinth of unknown ways,
He could not walk, at best he could but creep,
But now the velvet paths of wisdom meet
His eyes, bright lit by truth's undying rays.

HUMAN FLOWERS.

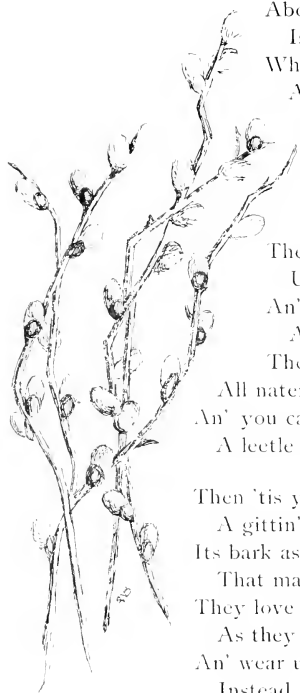
I love ter think we humans grow towards God
 Jest as the lily rises from the sod,—
 That friendship with the fields an' mother earth
 Give ter the human soul a wondrous worth.

THE SIEGE OF FATE.

Lay siege unto the citadel of fate,
 With shot and shell grind down its massive walls
 By day and night, until the fortress falls,
 And e'en thine enemies shall call thee great.



"FRIENDSHIP WITH THE FIELDS AN' MOTHER EARTH."

ABOUT THE SWEETEST TIME I KNOW.

About the sweetest time I know
 Is in the 'arly spring,
 When we hev lost most all the snow,
 An' birds begin ter sing;
 Then 'tis that nater's tender things,
 The cowslip an' the rest,
 Poke up their heads around the springs,
 Clad in their Sunday best.

Then 'tis the bluebird struts about
 Upon a leafless twig,
 An' perks his leetle feathers out
 An' tries ter look real big;
 Then 'tis the robin follows him,

All nater gits real bold,
 An' you can hear his evenin' hymn,
 A leetle faint and cold.

Then 'tis yer see the willer tree
 A gittin' budded out,
 Its bark as yaller's it can be,
 That makes the children shout;
 They love ter pick the leetle cats,
 As they have named the things,
 An' wear um round upon their hats
 Instead o' songbirds' wings;

"THEY LOVE TO PICK THE
 LEETLE CATS."

That is one thing I cannot see,
Why women that hev souls
Can ever make sech misery,
Ter fillergree their polls!
How men can take these leetle lives
That fill the world with song,
An' murder um ter deck their wives
An' then not think it wrong!

Then 'tis the butterflies an' bees
Come creepin' from the dark,
The sap goes stealin' up the trees,
An' nater's vital spark
Begins ter glow in bud an' leaf,
Though it has smouldered long,
An' all o' nater turns from grief
Ter sunshine an' ter song.

How that warm sunshine sends the blood
A coursing through my veins;
Jest as it goes ter leaf an' bud,
It fills our hearts an' brains;
Then rheumertiz an' other ills
Forget ter make us fret,
An' every heart with gladness fills
As full as it can get.

O God be praised for all the days
O' 'arly smilin' Spring,—
For all the ole sun's cheerin' rays,
An' all the birds that sing,

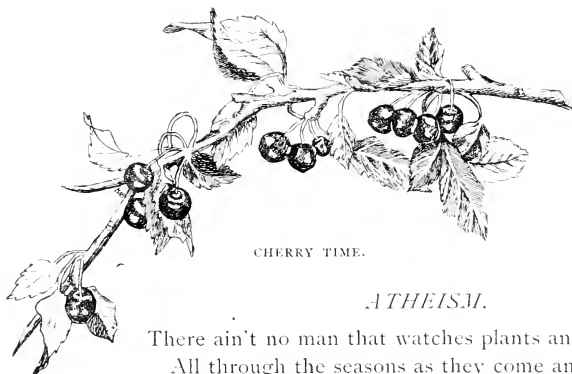
For ev'ry tender sign o' love
Revealed in grass an' flower,
Which whispers to us from above
With wondrous truth an' power!

NATER'S PERFUME.

Some city folks put scent upon their clothes,
An' try ter vie with nater's sweet perfume,
But most o' it is grievous to the nose
An' not like clover scent or apple bloom;
But ef they really want ter know what's good
I take 'em out into our ole back yard,
Where pinks an' roses are in tender bud,
An' they draw in their breath real hard,
An' then they 'low the stuff they hev is stale,
An' don't compare with nater's sweetest scent,
An' soon go nosin' round in lilies pale
An' roses fair—an' I am well content.



"CLOVER SCENT."



CHERRY TIME.

ATHEISM.

There ain't no man that watches plants an' flowers
All through the seasons as they come an' go,
From seed ter fruit, through tender leaf an' blow,
But learns ter know an' reverence God's power.

OPEN-HEARTED.

I like a man who stands up square an' says
Jest what he means, an' don't prevaricate,
But men who slip around with greasy lies
Ter ev'ry point o' view, I almost hate.

PRODIGALITY.

Ter spend a half a million on a tomb,
While countless freemen cry for bread an' meat,
Is somethin' that before the jedgment seat,
Ter Dives's ears 'll be the crack o' doom.

ROWEN.

Some men don't git beyound the rowen state,—
They are kept down by envy, pride, an' hate,
Yet think for noble manhood they can pass
When they are really hidden by the grass.

THE HEIGHT OF FASHION.

I'd heard so much on ev'ry hand
About the latest style,
And seen so much about it writ,
It seemed ter mean a pile;

I said I'd study into it,
Although I am a man,
An' see ef it wuz any part
O' nater or her plan;

See ef it hed ter do with life,
Its sorrow or its joy,
Or ef it wuz a painted thing
Ter please a gal or boy.

I've studied long an' hard on it,
An' gut at some idees
That make me feel as touchy as
A hive o' swarmin' bees.

We hed some city folks last year,
They came ter board a spell,
I gut a chance ter study um
An' larn my lesson well.



"A RESTIN' PLACE."

The fust thing that impressed me wuz,
They didn't seem ter know
The primal law o' harmony
That all our pastur's show.

They fussed an' furbelowed an' frilled
Until it made me faint,
For all the world like circus clowns,
Or warriors in their paint.

Now mind I don't set up agin
A dress that's gay an' bright,
Ef it is only worn with sense,
An' ev'rything is right.

But what ef nater turned about
An' grew a punkin vine,
When tender spring wuz pourin' out
Her pale ether'al wine?

An' what ef you should find a rose
Upon a chestnut tree—
Why don't you see how out o' place
The tender thing 'ud be ?

Another thing that strikes me queer,
Is why folks try for style,
An' leave their comfort out o' it—
When comfort helps a pile ;

Why they will pinch an' squeeze an' lace,
An' give umselves sech pains,
Ter change the form God made for um—
As though 'he hed no brains.

Now there ain't nothin' in the world
 So beautiful ter me
 As grace that comes from bein' strong
 An' nat'ral like an' free.

Another thing that puzzles me,
 Is why they change about,—
 One year they pull their dresses in,
 An' then they puff 'em out.

An' when they git a thing that's right,
 Why not be satisfied?
 The lily does not change its dress,
 An' could not ef it tried.



"NAT'RAL LIKE AN' FREE."

IDYLS OF OLD NEW ENGLAND.

Then why will people dye their hair
When it is gittin' gray ?
As though it wuz a dark disgrace
That they must put away.

It's my idee that silver locks,
Among the brown or gold,
Should fill the heart with reverence--
As full as it can hold ;

That youth should venerate the years
The foolish try ter hide,
An' look on wrinkled cheek an' brow
With reverence and pride.

Ter see an' aged grandmamma
A playin' twenty-three,
Is 'bout as pitiful a sight
As one 'ud want ter see.

I ain't a findin' fault with things
Because I love ter growl—
You must not take my preachin' for
The hootin' of an owl ;

But what I want is life that's sweet
An' wholesome like and pure,
An' so I try a mustard paste—
Perhaps ter work a cure.

Ter stir your feelin's up a bit,
An' let yer see how small
A thing the "height o' fashion" is,
Although it seems so tall.

TRIED AND TRUE.

One self-made man who fights his way ter fame
Through poverty, whom only sin can shame,
Is worth a score o' those poor sycophants
That fortune rears like sickly hothouse plants.

TRUE BLOOD IS BLUE BLOOD.

One drop o' that heroic Pilgrim blood
That burned for truth, that hardship could not tame,
Is worth the whole Atlantic's boundless flood
From veins o' them who live without an aim.

MYSTERIOUS MOONLIGHT.

Regent of night, fair Luna's silver arc
Glides through the vastness of the silent night,
With mellow moonbeams billowing the dark,
Flooding the fields and woods with amber light.

IDVLS OF OLD NEW ENGLAND.

THE LILY OF THE VALLEY.

Ladder to heaven, says a fable old,
By which the fairies climb to bliss untold;
Ah! could dull mortals shake off life's despair
And climb to heaven on so rich a stair!

A DAY IN SPRING.

A drowsy droning in the lilac bush,
Upon the sweet swamp pink a tender flush,
A gush of song from out the firmament,
And in the heart a sigh of deep content.



"A DAY IN SPRING."



"THY WATERFALLS."

TWO TREES.

An acorn fell on warm and sunny land;
There grew a slender tree with naught to stand.
Another fell where winter's fierce storms broke;
Pruned by the blast there grew a mighty oak.

NEW ENGLAND.

Hail! hail! New England! first the lands among
For freedom sought, when flashing broadswords rung,
By those whose souls could not endure the chains
By despots forged for human hearts and brains;
Fond fatherland, where first the Pilgrims trod
And woke the forests with their hymns to God;
Thy hills and vales are truly glorified
By these brave lives that here have lived and died,
And pomp of kings could not such wealth impart,—
For royalty is only of the heart.
Land of tradition and of glories won,
Where right is might, and justice, too, is done,
We scorn the titles emperor and king,
And to the world thy bold example fling.
We love to read the page of history o'er,
Of how thy orators in days of yore
Such brave words spake that freedom's sons awoke
On peak and plain, and galling fetters broke;
We love to wander where these heroes fell,
And once again the brave old battles tell.
This is the heritage that freemen guard—
This is the song that so delights the bard.

What wondrous truth thy gentle sage hath writ—
Thy Emerson; and Lowell's kindly wit,
How it hath pierced dull ignorance and wrong
When truth seemed weak, and made it grandly strong;
When Bryant walked in leafy, sun-flecked ways,
What sweet assurance filled his quiet lays;



"THE ROCK-RIDGED HILLS."

When bowed a slave beneath oppression's yoke,
To what stern wrath the Quaker bard awoke.
Phillips and Garrison are names we prize,
With Webster, Sumner, and the few that rise
Undimmed from out the past — those sons of fate
Who piloted our peerless ship of state.
Yet noblest heritage of mother earth,
Thy sons and daughters born of sterling worth;
With stalwart limbs and bright, unclouded brains,—
This is the height to which our realm attains.

What storied land that proud patricians seek
Beyond the seas, whose vale or mountain peak
Can quite compare with thy dear hills and dells,
Where fondest nature lays her deepest spells?
Mount Washington, that bears our patriot's name,
Like him sublime, above reproach or shame;
And that fair vale, in history and song,
Where sweeps the proud Connecticut along;
Thy rock-ridged hills, thy fertile, sunny plains,
Thy waterfalls, and rugged mountain chains,
Thy ferns and flowers, and e'en the verdant sod,
All give to life a deeper sense of God.

Hail! hail! New England! dwell in glory long,
Adown the ages may thy fame grow strong,
Thy sons be brave, thy daughters fair and true,
And fortune bring thee cloudless skies of blue.

FOOTPATHS.

A sidewalk allus makes yer walk jest so,
The Cop, he keeps yer ever on the go,
But cowpaths wind around by knoll an' tree,
Jest as my fancy kinder pulls on me.

NATER'S PALACES.

I've seen some palaces in Boston town,—
I 'low on um I really wouldn't frown,
But I could gaze a week an' then not see
All of the beauties in an ice-bound tree.

COMMUNION.

Sometimes out in the woods it is so still
Yer seem ter hear the ferns an' mosses grow;
An' in the silence unseen angels fill
Yer heart with love till it will overflow.

BLOSSOM TIME.

Soft as our fancies throug the winds at play
Are winnowing the orchard where in pride
Each tree is mantled, like a lovely bride
Beside the altar on her wedding day;
White are their gowns, with here and there a spray
Just tinged with pink or faint with crimson dyed,
Like lily cheeks that Cupid has espied

And softly tinted with the flush of May.
It is a day to idly sit and dream,
To float a silver skiff athwart the sky,
And like a lark be swallowed in the blue,
To drink the joy, the sun, the scent that streams
In all the winds, with deep content to sigh
And in a day live half a lifetime through.

THE DIAL OF TIME.

Two slender hands upon time's dial plate
Go creeping round and mark the hours of man,
Unconscious of his momentary plan
In all the circling years of time's estate ;
Nor fast, nor slow, nor pause for small or great,
An hour for Cæsar or Napoleon,—



“ BLOSSOM TIME.”

And so it was since first time's march began.
The lover cries, " My soul, it cannot wait !"
The murderer, " That hour will bring my doom !"
The sick man sighs, " To-morrow and the tomb,"—
While empires crumble like the cliffs to sand
Before the waves of years, and planets cold
Are clothed with life, and virgin spheres grow old
Beneath the dial balanced in God's hand.

WRITTEN ON HEARING HANDEL'S CREATION.

Out on the hush steal little waves of sound,
Jagged and broken, sad and incomplete,
And faintest melodies— not grand or sweet
But full of doubt, with minor chords around ;
Then to the ear there floats a deeper sound,
And flows the harmony with surer beat,
But, like poor human lives, ere half complete
It dies, and chaos reigns ; again 'tis found,
And soar the strains to an elysian height,
Cleaving to form and harmony and law,
Rushing through years and aeons as a day.
It dies,—again 'tis found, " Let there be light !"
Loud swell the strains as hammer beats of Thor,
And on creation smiles the infant day.

OUR LITTLE LIVES.

Like silent flakes of swiftly falling snow
That from the clouds drift downward to the earth,
Shifting and changing to the wild wind's mirth,—
Our little lives, that waver to and fro,
The sieve of years is sifting here below.
With scarce a day in which to prove their worth,
With scarce an hour unclouded quite from birth,
Our little lives take heart and try to grow.
And yet, they know, as all life needs must feel,
Each is a link within the chain complete
That binds creation to Jehovah's feet,
A little cog within a mighty wheel,—
And yet a part the rest must move upon,
And, feeling this, each little life strives on.

THE ORIOLE.

Flashes a flame of gold and crimson by,
Dazzling the vision with its wondrous hue,
As though a lens shot all the sunlight through
Upon that form and dimmed the summer sky;
Or like a smith, with mimic hammer high,
Of rubies made, who from a rainbow drew
Showers of sparks, thus when the oriole flew
His golden wings beat out such flames the eye

Could only dream of it when he had flown;
Then from the grove came such a burst of cheer
It echoes still in crannies of my soul.
Ah! bit of heaven, if when my life moves on
From earth to air it needs must linger here
In other form, be mine the oriole.

THE SILENT HOUSE.

Pathetic windows, curtainless and blank,
The front door fastened by an ivy spray,
Each pathway choked by weeds and grasses rank,—
These are the omens of a sure decay.



" THEN FROM THE GROVE CAME SUCH A BURST OF CHEER."

NIGHT LULLABIES.

In Boston town at night I hear the cars
Or heavy trucks, an' how each echo jars;
At hum I hear the wind in our elm tree,
An' never twice alike it sounds ter me.



"AT HUM I HEAR THE WIND IN OUR ELM TREE."

A BUD.

The tender bursting bud upon the tree
Is but a symbol of the fruit to be,
And so each life that pure and free is given
In infancy, is but a type of heaven.

SONG OF THE PLOUGHMAN.

Bring forth the plough, the frost is out,
And spring is here without a doubt;
Upon the cattle put their yoke,
The field and fallow must be broke,
For he who reaps in harvesting
Must sow his seeds in early spring.

The plough is brought from loft or shed,
Then forth the sturdy steers are led,
The yoke is placed upon their necks,
The plough is scoured all free from specks,
And Sam, the ploughboy, whip in hand,
Beside the cattle takes his stand.

Turn, turn, turn, empty are crib and bin,
Turn, turn, turn, ploughing the daisies in,
Turn, turn, turn, breaking the tufted sward,
Turn, turn, turn, reaping a rich reward.

The patient cattle plod along,
Their necks are bent, the yoke is strong;
The gleaming ploughshare cleaves the earth,
The burning sunbeams dance in mirth,
And oft the farmer stops the plough
And wipes the sweat from off his brow.

At every turn the ploughboy's "Gee!"
Across the field makes melody,
Full well the cattle know his whip,
They oft have felt its stinging tip,
Yet spite of muzzles, as they pass,
They stop to nip the tender grass.



"THE PATIENT CATTLE PLOD ALONG."

Turn, turn, turn, empty are crib and bin,
Turn, turn, turn, ploughing the daisies in,
Turn, turn, turn, breaking the tufted sward,
Turn, turn, turn, reaping a rich reward.

The robin greets the farmer's toil
With notes of joy, and shares the spoil;
Across the fresh turned earth he hops,
Before a luscious worm he stops,
Then chirps, "This farmer's mighty good
To plough all day to find me food."

At noon the ploughboy thunders, "Whoa!"
A word that well the oxen know,
And one they always will obey,
And they are left to meal and hay;
Meanwhile the farm hands never fail
To empty clean the dinner pail.

Turn, turn, turn, empty are crib and bin,
Turn, turn, turn, ploughing the daisies in,
Turn, turn, turn, breaking the tufted sward,
Turn, turn, turn, reaping a rich reward.

The dinner done they're off again—
These farmers are no idle men.
He earns his bread who tills the soil
By honest sweat and patient toil;
Still up and down with ceaseless tread,
This is the way his babes are fed.

And when the ploughpoint strikes a rock
And sends it back with sudden shock,
To dig the farmer in the ribs,
He takes fresh hold upon the nibs,
And pulls the plough back into place,
And moves along with cheery face.

Turn, turn, turn, empty are crib and bin,
Turn, turn, turn, ploughing the daisies in,
Turn, turn, turn, breaking the tufted sward,
Turn, turn, turn, reaping a rich reward.



“PLOUGHING THE DAISIES IN.”

The weary oxen reek with sweat,
The farmer's cotton shirt is wet,
Still up and down he patient goes,
Turning those narrow clean-cut rows,
Turning the furrows one by one
Until the long bright day is done.

Then toward the barn the cattle head,
Where they are stalled and groomed and fed;
But still in sleep they hear the cracks
Of Sam's long whip across their backs,
And stir uneasy in their stalls
Until the new milch heifer bawls.

And e'en the farmer old and wise
Oft rises in his bed and cries —
"Whoa! Sam, look out, we've struck a rock!"
And then he hears the kitchen clock
Just striking three, so down he lies
And sleep soon holds his tired eyes.

Turn, turn, turn, empty are crib and bin,
Turn, turn, turn, ploughing the daisies in,
Turn, turn, turn, breaking the tufted sward,
Turn, turn, turn, reaping a rich reward.

MÄ'S POSY BEDS.

When I git hum from work at noon
As tired as I can be,
There is one mighty purty sight
It does me good ter see,
An' that is mother's posy beds,
A-blushin' fit ter kill,
With butterflies and bees around,
A-drinkin' o' their fill.

The air is brimmin' over with
A hundred different scents
That come from the syringa bush
Beside the garden fence,
An' roses fair an' lilacs tall
That grow along the walk, —
But they ain't none o' them so gay
As my ole hollyhock.

Somehow I like the good ole kinds
O' posies full as well,
(Instead o' those with Latin names
That nobody can spell,)
Like mirigold an' asterziz
An' caliopsis fair,
An' bleedin' hearts an' arder tongues
An' ferns an' maidenhair.

Once when I's down ter Boston town,
I had some time ter pass,
So turned inter a posy place
Where everything wuz glass,

An' all the posies looked so pale
As though they'd like ter die,
Jest like them little city waifs,—
It made me want ter cry.

I tell yer what, the country is
The place ter make things grow,
No matter what the crap may be,
The city hain't no show;
An' as for raisin' human souls
An' givin' them a breath
O' God's free air, an' sunlight too,
We beat um all ter death.



"THE COUNTRY IS THE PLACE."



"THE OLD MILL."

MILL AND MILLER.

A moss-grown wheel with all its grist well ground —
Threescore an' ten the years with sorrow crown'd;
The toll is taken, an' the miller waits
For death a knockin' at the mill-yard gates.

A DISCOVERY.

A city cousin saw me salt the cow;
She said, "I know just why you do it now,
You salt the cattle freely in the stall
And then the butter do not salt at all."

A NEW FLOWER.

Once pickin' wild flowers with my Cousin May,
A Boston gal, I chanced ter step one side,
"Ah! here's a woodchuck's hole," I said; she cried,
"O pick me some of it for my bouquet!"

A MISTAKE.

Our Cousin Jerry came from Boston town
In sugarin' an' helped the camp ter tap,
An' then in August when he happened down
He went out to the maples for some sap.

MY DOG.

Come in, old beggar, whining at the door,
Come in, old Gip, and lie upon the floor,
And rest your faithful head upon my knee
And deem it joy to be alone with me;
My dear old dog, unto creation's end
Of all the world thou art my truest friend.

Thou dost not ask if I be rich the while,
Or if my coat is shabby or in style,
Or if the critics call me small or great,
Whether my life be full of joy or hate,
Or if my purse be over-lean or fat, —
All through and through thou art a democrat.

Thou dost not ask that I be good to thee,
It is enough that thou dost care for me;
And if this hand could beat thee from my door,
Thou wouldst come back at night and whine once more
To lick the hand that made thy body smart,
And love me still deep in thy doggish heart.

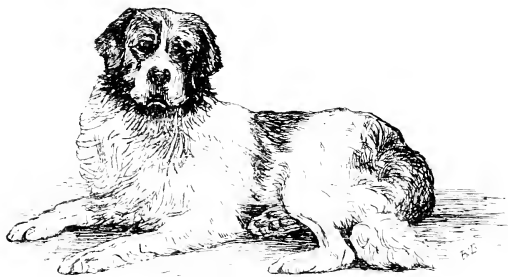
Thou dost not ask for dainty bread and meat
But lovest best the food I will not eat,
And sweet the bit, if looks I understand,
That thou canst eat from out thy master's hand,
And while wise men to thank the Lord may fail
Old Gip says "Thank you" with his wagging tail.

And if my dog is sleeping in the hall
I have no fear that danger will befall,

For thieves would find that passage doubly barred,
A truer soldier never mounted guard,
And lasting is a dog's fidelity
To those he loves as man's can ever be.

What love is beaming in those two brown eyes—
When chidden, too, what sorrow in them lies,
And how they follow me from place to place
As though they tried to read their master's face;
And how he springs and barks when I am glad,
How soon his tail will droop if I am sad.

And when I die, if friends forget to pine
There'll be one faithful dog to howl and whine,
To bark impatient at my bedroom door,
To search the meadow and the woodland o'er
And watch and whine for master who is late,
And die at last still waiting at the gate.



"MY DOG."

SUNNY.

In 'arly Spring the sunbeams are like wine—
I love ter sit jest where they sof'ly shine
An' drink um in an' feel the warm blood creep
Along my veins, an' then ter fall asleep.

TRANSFORMED.

In Autumn when Dame Nater kind o' grieves
Over her wasted beauties, an' the leaves
Are thick upon the ground, how sweet the scent,
As though the richness was in perfume spent.



“AUTUMN.”

PRAISIN' GOD.

At morn I think when all the woods are ringin'
The birds are praisin' God for warmth an' light,
An' then ag'in at night when they're a singin'
They're askin' him ter keep um through the night.

A SIGN.

The one idee that God has shaped a flower
Jest like the planets round the sun, each hour
That it might git the sun's most smilin' glance,
Is proof ter me that things don't go by chance.

CONSOLATION.

When God in that last translation
Lifts the veil before our eyes,
And we view the vast creation
Of the world beyond the skies,
And the Judge in glory rises
To pronounce each sentence then,
O there'll be some great surprises
In the deeds and hearts of men.

Things that seemed to us exalted
Will become as commonplace,
And the sinner where he halted
May have seen his Saviour's face;

While the glory and the splendor
That surrounded some high saint,
When all sham is rent asunder
May become as merest paint.

Lives that seemed to us so lowly
During their existence here
May become sublime and holy
In a higher, broader sphere;
While the hand that held the rudder
Of the mighty ship of state
May appear an empty shadow
In the judgment of the great.

Hearts that long in pain have anguished
And with sorrow made their bed
Shall forget that they have languished
And with rapture will be fed;
While the beggar, left to shiver
And to hunger at man's door,
Will taste life beyond the river
And shall never hunger more.

O, the hearts that here are broken
By a sorrow worse than death,
When the magic word is spoken
Heaven healeth in a breath;
There all dross is turned to treasure,
And the love earth could not give
Shall be ours in fullest measure
When we first begin to live.

Friends that long for friends have waited
 Shall behold them once again,
In a land that is not fated
 To have rapture linked with pain,
And the cadence of their pleasure
 Shall go ringing up the aisles
Of the city, in sweet measure,
 Where God's every creature smiles.

Then the mystery of nature
 Will be open to our eyes,
And we'll see in each new feature
 Some new lessons for surprise;



“THE MYSTERY OF NATURE.”

IDYLS OF OLD NEW ENGLAND.

And Jehovah will watch o'er us
In the city built sublime,
Where the years shall be a chorus
In the harmony of time.

EASTER MORN.

Over the eastern hills the day god swung
And night rolled back before his fulgent fire;
Then Nature's hand took up her matchless lyre
And every living thing to joy gave tongue,
And e'en the rocks and massive mountains sung;
Thus broke the morn when all creation's Sire
Bent low in love and o'er the broad empire
Of direst dark a benediction flung,
And from his tomb, while countless angels sung,
The Saviour rose and smote the gates of death
E'en with the bolts of God's eternal wrath,
Till sun and moon and constellation rung
And hallelujahs from the heavens above
Proclaimed man's freedom, and Omniscient love.

MY CATHEDRAL.

My grand cathedral is the universe,
That boundless dome no architect e'er drew,
With frescoed clouds that let the sunshine through,
And brighter gold than ever gleamed in purse;
Great mountains rising where the clouds disperse

Uphold the arch with pillars time did hew,
And from the mold sweet flowers and grasses grew
And carpets made, while birds did stay their course
To chant the anthems of this solitude
Till pæans rang from every field and wood,
While purling brook and sound of wind and rain,
Voices of God that soothe the heart's dull fear,
Such discourse spake of tender love and cheer,
Poor weary lives forgot one hour their pain.



"MY CATHEDRAL."

WHEN DEATH IS FAIR.

When the heart is numb with aching,
And a sickness fills the brain,
And the spirit's nigh to breaking
With the endless round of pain,
Then it is the dread death angel,
With his icy, numbing breath,
Seems to us a sweet evangel
And we shudder not at death,

But we listen for his coming
And his knocking at the gate,
Like the children at the lattice
For the father who is late.

THE NESTING OF THE BIRDS.

Oh come with me o'er the meadows wide,
Where wondrous grasses grow,
And the fairest flowers on every side
Their tinted petals show.

Where skies are soft as a maiden's eyes
When love-light lingers there,
And the balmy air and the sunny skies
Will lift your heart's dull care.

Oh, there's a song on the fragrant breeze
From every bird that sings,
And the rapture of their melodies
Through all the welkin rings.

For 'tis to nest that the birds are here,
In every breast is song,
And each troubadour to his lady dear
Is singing all day long.

And soon with slender sticks and straws,
All seeming without plan,
They will build a nest that will baffle laws
And architects of man.

With three warm eggs 'neath the mother's breast,
What joys the days will bring;
From his perch in the leaves, by her looks caressed,
Oh, how the mate will sing!



"OH COME WITH ME O'ER THE MEADOWS WIDE."

What love will brood o'er these little homes
Deep hid in trees or grass;
How their hearts will beat when a danger comes,
What rapture if it pass!

What lessons here for our higher life
Are taught us by the birds,
With their simple ways for our complex strife,
And songs instead of words!

— — —

DEW OF JUNE.

The "Dew of June," an Indian name, you see,
Yet to the senses beautiful and sweet,
With poetry and music most replete;
And what could be more holy, pure, and free
Than this moss altar 'neath the greenwood tree?
Beside a mountain torrent flowing fleet
We christened her, it was a strange conceit,
But from the scene the sweet name came to me.

And grew the maiden wondrous tall and fair,
Her eyes were deep as mountain lakes and springs,
Her form the willow that the breezes sway,
Her locks the jet that sleekest sables wear,
Her laugh the song that blithest skylarks sing,
And in her heart were truth and joy alway.

THE OLE MEETIN'-HOUSE.

On the hill jest over yender
Is a sacred spot I know,
Where the meetin'-house was planted
Mor'n a century ago;

Now the place is quite forsaken,
But my thoughts go strayin' there,
An' agin I hear the church bell
At the solemn hour o' prayer.

Long an' low an' rather squatty,
Built o' timbers roughly hewn,
So that it gave scurce no echo,
Nor resounded to a tune;

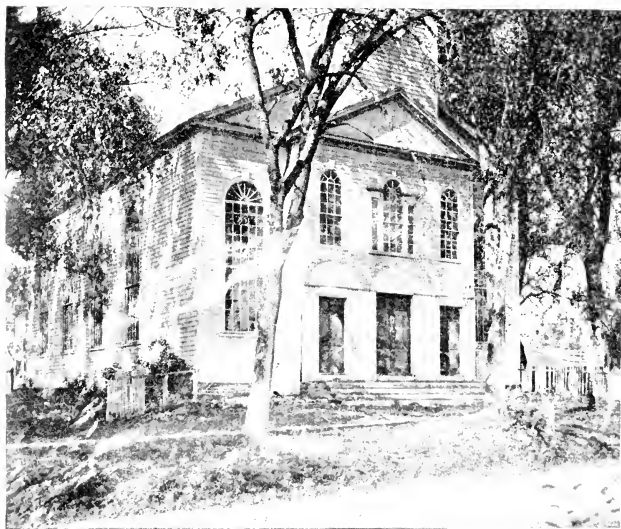
But I've heard them rafters ringin'
When we rose ter sing God's praise,
For the people all were singers
In them good ole-fashioned days.

What a row of han'some faces
Formed the circle o' that choir!
How that tender Sunday pictur'
Fills my heart with youthful fire!

On the right were all the basses
An' the tenors in a row,
On the left a score o' lasses —
Not fixed up ter make a show,

But each dressed in simple garments
That ter beauty gave a power,
As the leaves around a lily
But the better show the flower.

There across the way each lover
Saw his sweetheart's wondrous face ;
An' though levity an' sparkin'
Were considered out o' place,



"THE OLE MEETIN' HOUSE."

Yet in pray'ér, with covert glances
Frequently the lovers met,—
Eyes spoke love in shy advances
That the heart could not forget.

There wuz Eben with his fiddle,
How he dashed the bow about !
An' the viol, that wuz Caleb's,
How he'd drown the basses out !

I played flute, an' Peleg Winters
Played the tenor on his horn ;
When we all were in commotion
It wuz like the jedgment morn.

Parson Bumshell wuz the fust one
That I seem ter recollect ;
“ Woe ter sinners ” wuz his war cry,
An' he kept us circumspect ;

For the youth wuz sure o' heaven,
Or in sin beyond his years,
Who could hear his awful warnin's
An' not quake with in'ard fears.

Parson Bumshell gave um doctrin',
Preached from Genesis an' Job,
Pictur'd hell an' all its torments,
An' the saint in spotless robe :

There we listened ter his preachin'
 Ev'ry Sunday in the year;
In the mornin' and the evenin'
 Dwelt he on our hope an' fear.

Say you that he wuz too narrer,
 That he preached too much on hell?
Wal! I hardly dare ter jedge him,—
 God could do that full as well.

An' besides I am not sartin
 That he did not fill our needs,
For it wuz a rugged gospel
 That inspired our noblest deeds;

An' the times were full o' hardships,
 Like the forests rough an' wild;
An' I dare say human nater
 Bred this rudeness in each child.

An' perhaps this gination
 Hez gone jest as far astray
From their narnerness ter freedom
 That diverges from God's way;

For we humans are but ripples
 On the mighty sea o' time,
An' God knows the things agin us,
 An' the height ter which we climb.

An' each gineration changes,
 One goes up an' one goes down,
One is born for blood an' fightin',
 One is made for larnin's crown;



"LIKE THE FORESTS ROUGH AN' WILD."

IDYLS OF OLD NEW ENGLAND.

An' the Lord who watches o'er us
Mebbe takes a thousan' years
Ter work out some mighty purpose,
Through our heartaches an' our tears.

How this ole church starts me thinkin',
Sets my heart an' brain afire,
Brings me back ter hum an' mother,
An' the gray head o' my sire!

An' I'm sure for heartfelt worship
That the splendor o' St. Paul's
Never saw sech true devotion
As we felt within them walls.

LOVE'S FASTNESS.

There are some walks in life by reason sought
To which the feelings only can aspire,
But that the mind afar must needs admire,
Yet cannot touch; they are too high for thought.

MY TREASURES.

My treasures are not wealth of hoarded gold,
Nor plaudits from the world that swell the skies,
But mine the vision of two wondrous eyes
Aglow with love, and two small hands to hold.



"THE OLE MAN'S MEDITATION."

HOPE IS A BIRD.

Hope is a bird that loves the free blue sky,
And soareth up from sordid things and low ;
Fate is an archer fitting in his bow
The cruel shaft,—alas! that hope should die.

THE LAST SLEEP.

As tranquil as a babe that falls asleep
Upon its mother's knee,
Without a sigh or any cause to weep
May thy last slumber be.

GOD'S PRUNING TIME.

The hour of sorrow is God's pruning time —
Grief cleaves a branch that other parts may climb
To clearer sky, and though the wound may bleed
The vital sap some other shoot will feed.

JUNE.

The Goddess Nature spread a feast one day.
From all her fairest flowers she took a spray,
And festoons made and hung around the board.
When all had supped, rich wine the Goddess poured
And smiling said, " This is my greatest boon,
Quaff deep and long, it is the month of June."

THE SUNKEN SHIP.

Five hundred fathoms deep the vessel lies,
Upon the bottom of the cruel sea,
And all the love that ever cared for me
Was at the helm, and it will never rise.

WHEN FORTUNE SMILES.

When fortune smiles spread all her canvas wide
And loose thy ship for action strong and grand,
Or fate will pass and leave upon the sand
A shipwrecked life forever cast aside.

THE FARMER'S ALARM CLOCK.

There is one clock I never hev ter wind,
It runs month in, month out, all through the year;
Each morn at four I'm allus brought ter mind
By cock-a-doodle-doo, from chanticleer.

THE DESERTED HOMESTEAD.

Poor are the pilgrims on life's stony way
Who, turning from the beaten track astray,
To some secluded spot, or quiet roof,
Where once perchance they spent their happy youth,
Who ne'er have felt at each familiar turn,
With eyes that fill and hearts that throb and burn,



"TO SOME SECLUDED SPOT, OR QUIET ROOF."

The quiet charms of dear familiar ways,
The half forgotten joys of other days.

How well do I recall that happy day
When turning from the noisy world away,
By quiet lanes that never failed to charm,
I sought my home, the old deserted farm.
It was a winsome day in early fall,
A time when nature broodeth over all
Her broad domain of fruitful fields and woods,
And woos the wand'rer in her gayest moods.
I heard the south wind whisper to the corn,—
Its pennons streamed and rustled back in scorn;
Each grain field caught the sunbeams in their flight
And shot them back in mellow, amber light;
In deeper shades the birches' silver sheen
Shed softest rays the emerald boughs between;
The distant hills were robed in gold and dun
And hazy skies subdued the summer sun;
And as I journeyed through that pleasant lane
Where peace and plenty seemed to ever reign,
I thought how sordid is our bitter strife
For gold, beside this quiet country life.

But now the dear old homestead comes in sight
Upon the hill above me, on the right,—
Ah! can it be the same, the grand old place,
The mansion on the hill, that oft my face
In childhood's happy days so eager spied,
The home that was our father's joy and pride,
That kin had held two hundred years and more,
Since first the Pilgrims landed on this shore?

Or is it that a flood of blinding tears
And all the growth and change of many years
Have come between me and the dear old scene,
And made my youthful palace seem so mean?
O gold! that robs this world of half its wealth,
O lore! that cheats the soul of joy and health,
I'd blot these weary years from heart and brain
To live that sweet delusion o'er again.

'Tis clearer now, I see the gable roof
Look outward from the elm tree's verdant woof
Like some familiar face, and lower still
The friendly wild-rose on the window sill,
Where oft I sat when day and toil were o'er,
And longed to roam the world on sea and shore,
And dreamed of love and fame and cruel wars,
Awhile the night wind whispered to the stars.



"I SEE THE GABLE ROOF."

Ah, yes! I see the woodbine on the ell,
The towering well sweep that I knew so well,
And on the barn the same old weather vane
That told of yore of sunshine and of rain.

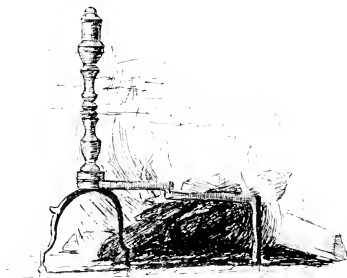
But half the quaint old roof has fallen in
And winter blasts have worn the shingles thin,
While each dejected window sash complains
That storms and stones have robbed it of its panes.
Upon one hinge the front door grinds and squeaks;
Like some poor human thing it plainly speaks
Of sad neglect and changing heat and cold
That fill its joints with pains and make it old.

Here is the ancient fireplace, broad and tall,
How cheerful was its firelight on the wall!
Here oft I sat on stormy winter nights
And watched the restless ever-changing lights
Upon the logs, or traced a tiny spark
Far up the dingy flue into the dark;
Some prudent squirrel leaves his winter store
Upon the landing of my chamber door,
And rude rats scamper o'er the floor and hide
Behind the dingy walls that were my pride;
For vermin comes to gloat o'er man's decay,
And haunt his home when he has passed away.

Here is the barn,—ah! what a place to play
When mow and loft are filled with new-mown hay,
And all the air is sweet with clover scent—
To climb the beams and jump from bent to bent,

Or search the haymows for a stolen nest ;
Of all the play-rooms known this is the best.
And when I gaze adown yon winding lane,
My age departs and youth comes back again.
I see a barefoot boy in homely dress,
The prince of that rich kingdom, happiness ;
A brimless palm leaf is his regal crown,
His ruddy cheeks are tinged with russet brown,
His sunny face could never wear a cloud,
No rich estates could make him half so proud,
His scepter is a leafless maple browse,
His Majesty is driving home the cows.

What pain would fill his heart if father knew
That witch grass claimed the fields where clover grew,
That all the meadow hay was filled with swale,
His cherished wood-lot stripped for tie and rail,
That all the pasture lots were choked with brush,



“OR TRACED A TINY SPARK.”

The meadow lowlands grown to reed and rush ;
If he could see the ancient orchard's rows
Of stately trees uprooted by the blows
That strip the rotting shingles from the shed
And shake the crazy rafters overhead,
That raze the gates and fences to the ground,
And scatter direst desolation round !
Ah ! well for him his humble life was taken
Before New England homesteads were forsaken.

'Tis eventide, the shades of night draw near
And one by one the silent stars appear,
Those silver tapers that the angels hold
Above the clouds to view the sleeping wold ;
The night winds faintly whisper as they pass,
A cricket chirps beside me in the grass,
The elm tree gently stirs its countless leaves,
And over all a benediction breathes
More deep than sleep, more tranquil than the calms
Of some fair oasis with breathless palms.

Farewell ! farewell ! fair haven of my youth,
Thou sweet abode of innocence and truth,
And though my feet may leave thee far behind,
No chance or change shall blot thee from my mind.
And when at eve the city streets are hot
Fond memory shall lead me to this spot.
Then for the din, the rumble, and the grind,
Mine ears shall hear the murmur of the wind ;
And when at last life's little day is spent
And death shall claim this form, infirm and bent,

I beg some friend to whom I once was dear,
To break the turf and lay the poet here.
Here 'neath the elm where every idle breath
Shall murmur low a requiem for death,
Where first in spring the lilac sheds its bloom
And last in fall the verdure gathers gloom;
That men may know of all the classic ground
Where poets sleep, the leagued world around,
I place New England high above the rest,
I hold this spot the fairest and the best.

HOW BE YER?

I don't gin much for city ways
O' ginnin' a hand shake,
This takin' hold o' people's hands
As though you thought they'd break;
I like to hev um grip my hand
Like 'twas an ax or plow,
An' gin my arm a wrench an' say,
How be yer anyhow?

THE DUDE.

The man whose heart is wholly bound up in
A new cravat, or how his trousers fit,
Who cannot bear ter soil his lily skin
Ain't worth a fling, so I won't waste my wit.

GOD'S OPULENCE.

What a world there is of beauty
In the mosses on a fence!
How it magnifies our duty
To behold God's opulence!



"THE MOSSES ON A FENCE."

CHESTNUT BURRS.

Some folks are jest like prickly chestnut burrs,
They are so techy an' so easy crost,
They ain't no 'arthly good until the frost
O' some great grief the goodness in um stirs.

AN EYE FOR BEAUTY.

Some people think a farmer hain't no eye
For beauty, an' Dame Nater's wondrous art;
But gazin' on the flowers, an' field, an' sky
Is half o' life ter one old hayseed's heart.

FINE FEELIN'S.

Fine feel'n's ain't a thing that comes with gold
Or larnin', or with livin' grand an' free;
For high-up folks are often hard an' cold
While low-down folks are full of sympathy.

AFTER THE LEAVES.

There is a beauty in the naked trees,
A tenderness in faded leaf and flower,
A store of thought in each dull, withered thing,
That summer's lavish richness does not hold
Though gilded by the sun's divinest rays;

As though the reveler with empty cup
Still in his hand had paused a moment ere
He drank again, to taste awhile the draught
That he had drained. We who have quaffed the wine
Of flowery months, deep, warm, delicious draughts
Of life and light, pause on the brink of dearth
To dream again the joy of summer days.
And are these leaves not like our silver hairs,
Or like the wrinkles on a careworn face,
Symbols of age, of beauty that has been,
Of days and years gone by, and us grown old?
And how are we more vital than the leaves
Were it not for the soul that burns within?
In springtime all the wood is merriment,
Song-full with chirp and carol everywhere;



"AFTER THE LEAVES."

But now is solemn stillness over all—
This too is proper setting for our years,
With somber coloring of gray and brown,
And mosses wrinkled like an old man's skin,
And leaves that tremble as with palsied age.
Each spring I hasten forth to drink its wine,
Attend the sounds of revelry and youth,
And in that transport am a child again;
But in the autumn forth with solemn steps
I wander to the woods to sit and brood,
To note how time and I are getting on,
To think how few the years that intervene
Between me and that last mysterious change,
When like the leaves that crumble in my hand
My form will crumble in the hand of death
And I shall know the meaning of these tears.

SONG OF THE THRESHER.

In the autumn time when the barn is sweet
With the scent of hay and the fragrant wheat,
When corn and rye and the slender oats
Are lying still in their autumn coats,
When loft and mow and the broad deep bay
Are brimming o'er with the grain and hay,
Then the farmer takes from a dusty nail
In the barn or shed his well worn flail:

He oils the joint and he makes it tight,
Then swings it 'round with a boy's delight.
Ah! yes, 'twill do, 'tis the same old stick,
It hangs so neat and it swings so slick,
He must be off to the barn and try
His hand once more at the oats and rye;
And so he stands on the well filled floor
And swings his flail by the big barn door.

Whack, whack, swing, swing,
How the oat straws dance and the rafters ring!
Swing, swing, whack, whack,
Shelling the grain for the empty sack,
Though the back may ache and the muscles crack,
Swing, swing, whack, whack,
Shelling the grain for the empty sack.

He remembers how in the early spring
When the slender sprouts had begun to fling
The crusted dirt from their tender heads
He had watched them there in their lowly beds,
As faithfully as a father would,
As tenderly as a mother could,
He watched them grow in the fertile field,
From blight and plague he was their shield.

Then in July when the air was hot
He saw them grow with a sudden start;
They seemed to lengthen and swell each day—
“I can hear um grow,” the farmer would say;

The merry wind with an elfin glee
Said, "This is a field that was made for me,"
And the ripening heads of the grain he tossed
Till they rose and fell like a marching host.

Whack, whack, swing, swing,
How the oat straws dance and the rafters ring!
Swing, swing, whack, whack,
Shelling the grain for the empty sack,
Though the back may ache and the muscles crack,
Swing, swing, whack, whack,
Shelling the grain for the empty sack.

A joy it was to recall the day
When the scythe and sickle came in play,
And the reaper, too, like a chariot bold
Laid the golden grain in the binder's fold,
And gleamed the shocks in the setting sun
Like an army's tents when the march is done;
Then came the teams with their mighty racks
And bore them away to be laid in stacks.



"THEN IN JULY."

Now dance the sheaves on the floor of oak
While the grain is shelled with each heavy stroke;
The flail goes up, then it swings around
And swift descends with a rhythmic sound.
Here is a vision of groaning boards,
Of the attic's store and the pantry's hoards:
So while the flail with a will he swings,
The joyous farmer a chorus sings.

Whack, whack, swing, swing,
How the oat straws dance and the rafters ring!
Swing, swing, whack, whack,
Shelling the grain for the empty sack.
Though the back may ache and the muscles crack,
Swing, swing, whack, whack,
Shelling the grain for the empty sack.



"WHEN THE SCYTHE AND SICKLE CAME IN PLAY."



"NATER'S PALACE."

THE DANDELION.

Some people call this flower a humbly thing,
Jest suited ter adorn a country clod;
Ter me it is the tender smile o' God
That April brings ter cheer the 'arly spring.

KEEP UP YER FENCES.

Don't let no hole git in yer moral fence,
But keep it jest above Temptation's nose,
For if one little peccadillo goes
Ter tother side a score will follow hence.

L. O. C.



“KEEP UP YER FENCES.”

EARTH'S PRIMAL COLOR.

Ver'd hardly think when nater's scenes unfold,
The leetle spears o' grass would be so bold
That they would spread themselves on ev'ry hand
Until their green should cover all the land.

SINCE HANNAH ANSWERED "YES."

I 'low a change has come my way,
The wind has kind o' shifted,
Life didn't hardly seem ter pay
Afore the shadow lifted.

The farm wuz all a runnin' down,
The craps wuz gittin' bad,
There wa'n't no market in the town
For anything I had;

The pigs looked runty, an' the cows
Were all a goin' dry,
There wa'n't much clover in the mows,
An' provender wuz high;

An' somehow, too, the dear ole sky
Looked duller ev'ry day,—
Perhaps 'twas somethin' in my eye
That made it seem that way.

But one dark night there came a change —
There! now, I've let it out;
It seemed ter me so very strange
That it should come about.

This night I saw a dear girl hum ;
Nor dreamed that she would bless
My lonely life, yet told her all,
An' Hannah answered " Yes."

Why! what a change came over things!
The pigs began ter fat!
The hens laid eggs enough each day
Ter more than fill my hat!

The weeds got scurser, an' the craps
Began to grow like mad,
An' ev'ry day wuz bright enough
Ter make a stun wall glad!

All nater seemed ter jine right in!
Perhaps you'll think it chaff,
But true's I'm born that very night
Ole Brindle hed a caff!



"THE HENS LAID EGGS ENOUGH EACH DAY."

THE WEATHER VANE.

I plan my farmin' by the weather vane —
When due northwest I say it will not rain;
But in our human lot there ain't no sign
To tell yer if the day'll be foul or fine.

HUMILITY.

Jack knew he wuz a dunce, an' so he tried
Ter fill the void; a learned man he died.
Tom thought that he could for a genius pass,
Yet when he died men voted him an ass.

A LAW OF NATER.

Yer can't plant cabbage seed an' git a tater,
Not in my garden patch, an' that ain't nater;
An' he who goes around a-sowin' evil,
Will reap a crap o' pigweeds from the devil.

NANTY.

When I see a feller round a-blowin'
About how much he knows, a kinder crowin'
Over the saints, an' over all creation,
I'm mighty glad he ain't o' my relation.

OUR SINS.

Our sins are like the weeds we see a-growin'
Down in the medder lot when we're a-mowin',
For if there's one a-noddin' in the clover
There's almost sartin sure to be another.

BEAUTY TO A FARMER.

There is beauty to a farmer —
Now you people needn't laff —
In the antics an' the capers
O' a leetle frisky caff.



“A LITTLE FRISKY CAFF.”

SOW 'ARLY.

Git in yer seed as 'arly as yer can,
In oats or deeds don't wait ter be a man;
Sow gentle deeds and honesty in youth
An' then in age reap tenderness an' truth.

SEEIN' HANNAH HUM.

'Twas in the forties, an' I guess
Nigh fifty year ago,
When this here incident occurred —
I swow! how time does go!

That winter we hed spellin' schools
An' ev'ry kind o' fun
That took us young folks 'arly out,
An' kep' us out till one!

This night it wuz a parin' bee
Ter which the crowd hed come,
An' when the rest were matin' up
I asked dear Hannah hum.

I tell yer what! I did feel proud
A trudgin' hum with her;
I wouldn't 'a' cared ef it hed been
A hundred times as fur.

The moon wuz full, the stars aglow,
The snow all gleamin' bright;
I don't believe there ever wuz
Another sech a night.

There wuz one drawback that we hed;
The snow wuz mighty deep,
We hed ter walk in dif'runt paths
Or else in file like sheep.

It wuz too fur apart ter be
When we were opposite,
So by-and-by we jined our hands
An' they were jest a fit.

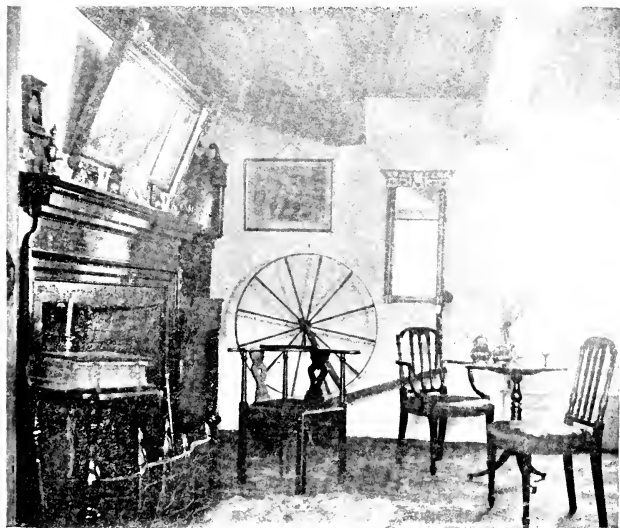
This made me walk upon the core,
Above my ladylove,
An' ev'ry now an' then I'd slip,
An' give the snow a shove.

But Hannah didn't seem ter mind
Ef it got in her shoe,
An' ef I filled my overshoes
I do not think I knew.

When I stepped down inter a hole,—
I couldn't alluz tell,—
I would give Hannah's hand a yank,
An' maybe she, too, fell.

But then I helped her up each time
Whenever she went down,
An' jest about that time I wuz
The biggest chap in town.

I tried ter talk a little bit,
But didn't do it slick,
For when it came around my turn
My tongue 'd alluz stick.



"HANNAH'S PARLOR."

But I did manage in a way
Ter tell about our cow,
An' politics, an' keepin' hens,
Which wasn't much I 'low.

I longed ter speak dear Hannah's name,
But it wuz alluz Miss;
I wondered ef she cared for me,
Or ef she'd stand a kiss.

I've faced a bull when he wuz mad
An' not felt half so scat!
An' takin' wildcats out o' traps
Ain't nothin' side o' that!

I might hev been a bachelor
Ter this here blessed day,
Ef somethin' hedn't happened then
That kind o' cleared the way.

We hed got down inter the woods
Where it wuz mighty dark,
I hed ter kinder feel my way
An' didn't try ter spark;

For here the road went dif'runt ways,
The left wuz twice as fur,
So I gave Hannah's hand a squeeze
An' jokin' said ter her,

“ Here is the place ter make a change;
In spite o’ nippin’ weather
Lets you an’ I walk on an’ on
The longest way together.”

Then Hannah gave my arm a squeeze,—
It made my heart stan’ still,—
An’ said, “ You mean I be your wife—
Yes, Jonathan, I will.”

An’ that is all there is ter tell
Save that I claimed my own,
An’ fifty year love’s radiance
Upon our path hez shone.



“ WHEN I COME 'ROUND THE CORNER IN THE ROAD.”

WELCOME.

When I come 'round the corner in the road
An' see the smoke out of the chimbley blow'd,
Or git a squint at our ole weather vane,
An' hear the cattle lowin' in the lane,
An' Ponto barkin' jest because I've come,
Seems mighty good ter be a gittin' hum.

OUR MOODS.

Our moods ter me are like the swallow's flight,
Now slow an' dull, then airy, swift, an' light,
Now mountin' up inter the zenith sky,
Then sinkin' down ter depths o' misery.

TO WAIT.

'Tis not the shock of arms, the shattered steel,
That makes the heart grow sick, the brain to reel;
It is to sit within the courts of fate,
Uncertain of your doom, and silent wait.

THE OLE WELL SWEEP.

Yes, when I wuz a boy it seemed so high
I thought the top of it jest teched the sky;
But now it ain't so grand a sight ter see—
I wonder ef it is the sweep or me.

WEAR YER MOURNIN' IN YER HEART.

Wear yer mournin' in yer heart
An' not upon yer sleeve,
As though it wuz a kinder sign
Ter let folks know yer grieve.
For mournin' really should go deep,—
Beyond my power to tell,—
So don't make it a circus bill
That ev'ry boy can spell.

Besides, the sorrow that a man
Can wear upon his hat,
A kind o' flauntin' it about,
Is jest a leetle flat,
An' I should say it did not go
Much deeper than the skin;
For men o' feelin' close their hearts
When vulgar eyes look in.

An' ain't our grief a sacred thing
That we must bear alone,
That we can only talk about
Ter God afore His throne?
An' don't it kind o' tarnish grief
Ter hev ter trot it out
An' let the world examine it,
An' turn it inside out?

Now mind,— I ain't agin a bit
O' somethin' worn apart
From all this show, a symbol o'
The grief that's in the heart;

But wear it sacredly an' hide
 It from all vulgar eyes;
 Jest as the mystery o' God
 Is hidden by the skies.

SYMPATHY.

Humanity is God's great harp of hearts,
 Each soul a string—a note in life's strange key
 Attuned to all earth's joy and misery;
 Strike one lone string and through the whole there starts
 A sympathetic strain and all the parts
 Will weep with woe or laugh with ecstasy;
 There is no note that truly should not be
 A part of all the rest, and pain ne'er darts
 Into one life or sorrow clouds one brain
 But that another's soul is touched with pain;
 Love-linked, life-wed with one another's grief
 Is all the world, and every human heart
 Must weep with grief and laugh with joy apart
 And find in sympathy its own relief.

WHAT AIR OUR STATESMEN COMIN' TER?

What air our statesmen comin' ter —
 Does any mortal know?
 I mean while they are with us here —
 We all know where they go.

Yer see it at election time
When candidates come roun'
An' stamp an' shout from A ter Z
Ter prove that black is brown.

Yer see it when the tables turn
An' parties change about,
With new officials hustled in
An' ole ones hustled out.

Yer see it when the state convenes
At its proud capital
An' sends a man ter Washington —
“Because he helped last fall.”



“WHERE THE WORLD IS ALL MADE OVER.”

Yer see it when our leetle towns
Know all the shams and tricks
For lobbyin' a measure through
By peanut politics.

Yer see it when a tariff bill
Goes flound'rin' on its way;
'Tis then each patriot citizen
For Uncle Sam should pray.

It made me almost want ter swear,
A readin' t'other day
'Bout one o' our cheap demagogs,
The things he hed ter say;

Right in the dear ole Senate, too,
Where Webster used ter fence
With John Calhoun and Henry Clay,
An' men that hed some sense;

An' here this sycophant upriz
Ter feather his own nest,
An' howled at his constitooents,
An' told us what was best;

An' called gray-headed statesmen fools,
A blattin' like a caff,
He vilely slandered Uncle Sam
An' made the gallery laff;

IDYLS OF OLD NEW ENGLAND.

While all the government stood still,
A waitin' in suspense,
Until this new-made senator
Should air his ignorance.

An' he a sowin' anarchy
An' talkin' discontent,
A sayin' how he wuz a saint
Upon a mission sent.



"THE GOOD OLE-FASHIONED THINGS."

Wal, yes, he's on a mission there —
I guess he sent himself,
An' he is lookin' for a chance
Ter git a leetle pelf.

It ain't so much the people's fault,
For they are jest as brave
As when they trained with Washington,
Or fit ter free the slave.

But all the nation's politics
Is full of dirt an' chaff,
An' we hev got ter winnow it
With winds of righteous wrath;

An' stir our Congress up a bit
An' find what it's about,
An' bury demagogs so deep
That they won't even sprout.

PLEBEIAN RICHES.

Truth hath no clique, her beauties will not shun
The humblest heart e'en though patricians glare;
Love hath no caste, for like the morning sun
Its radiance the lowly life may share.



“SOFT SIGHS THE DARKLING PINE.”

A SIGH FROM NATURE.

Is it the woe inherent in all mirth,
The finite life that craves a higher birth,
That nature feels, e'en like your heart and mine,
When on the air soft sighs the darkling pine?

THE UNSEEN STRIFE.

Down in the dregs and wretchedness of life,
Where right from wrong the angels scarce can see,
The fiercest fight 'gainst human destiny
That souls can wage, is but man's daily strife.

RESISTANCE.

The eagle deems that air retards his flight,
Yet without atmosphere in vain his might;
So human souls are seeming balked by fate
With obstacles that serve to make them great.

SUCCESS.

Success oft dulls the very edge of life,
And gold breeds poverty;
Only the soul that lives in endless strife
Is all that it should be.

THE FARMER'S DELIGHT.

It does me good ter hear the corn a-growin',
And see the taters from the brown 'arth rise,
Ter see the buckwheat nod an' look real knowin',
An' punkins prophesy o' next year's pies.

THE HEARTS OF HEROES.

The lap of luxury will not breed men.
Remember how when Xerxes' army poured
Through mountain pass Athenæ plied her pen
And brush, the while she smote them with her sword.

Remember how that Rome in days of yore
Drew finest form, and noblest epic sung,
While with her sword she drank barbaric gore,
And Alp and Apennine with battle rung.



“AN’ PUNKINS PROPHESY O’ NEXT YEAR’S PIES.”

Remember how old ocean's dark waves tost,
And how the winter woods did shriek and moan
When first the Pilgrims landed on this coast
And laid in blood Columbia's corner stone.

Stern souls have those who mold the lives of men,
With hearts like cliffs that cannot shaken be,
Yet full of noble tenderness, and then
They win from fate man's highest destiny.

TWO DEAD.

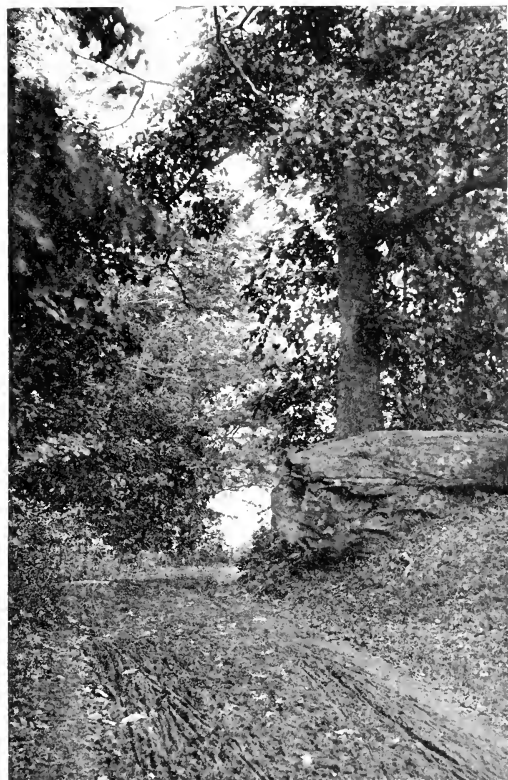
A soldier falls in the battle's brunt
Where manly forms are strewn around,
And the rest sweep on to the very front,
And leave him lying on the ground.
He hears the sound of their rushing feet,
But still above the battle's roar
He hears the voice of his true love sweet
As she says good-by at her father's door.

The hot sun beats on his throbbing brow,
And yet his anguish is unguessed;
Of that distant home he is dreaming now,
With her dear head upon his breast.
He feels no pain, though the end is near,
For he is turning home once more,
And he hears the voice of his true love dear
As she says good-by at her father's door.

The sun goes down on a victory
That does not seem to bear alloy,
And the good news speeds over land and sea,
And fills the nation's heart with joy,
And yet a girl by her father's door
Was standing when the fight was done;
In her loving heart was the wound he bore,
And two were dead instead of one.

MAN'S DESTINY.

The day's last smile illumes the distant hill,
The golden glory of the matchless scene
Maketh my heart with ecstasy to thrill,
And yet a shade of sadness falls between.
Wherefore such glory for a mortal eye,
Such majesty of mountain and of plain,
Such heavenly hope in earth and sea and sky,
If man must lose in death his heart and brain?
And this the creed the hills declared to me:
Yea! truth and beauty live eternally,
And all there is of good enthroned in man,
Of love and truth and holy ecstasy,
Shall e'en outlast yon granite rocks, and be
A part o' God, when earth hath lost its plan.



"SHALL E'EN OUTLAST YON GRANITE ROCKS."

FINITE AND INFINITE.

When will the weighty secret of that pain
That fills my heart with each new sense of truth,
Fall like a meteor through the fragile roof
Of e'en the grandest thought man doth attain?
When will this life give to the heart and brain
A draught so deep that man will cry enough?
When from himself will man be held aloof
By such a power that sin shall cease to reign?
When will he rise triumphant like a star
Out of his groove into the trackless sky
And circumscribe the utmost thought of God?
When he has grown in wisdom on a par
E'en with the thought of God; then will he die
Like flowers in seed that turn again to sod.

THE OLD STAGECOACH.

I've crossed the plains in a flying train
That thundered along in high disdain
By city street and country lane;

I've sailed the seas in a stately ship
And felt the billows rise and dip
When the wind of the waves had made a whip;

But the jolliest ride that ever I had,
The one that made my heart full glad,
Was in a coach, and I a lad.

The winds are soft, the skies are fair,
In nature's heart is no despair,
For bud and bloom are everywhere;
So hurry along with rattle and song,
The wheels are stout, the axles strong,
O there's many a turn and the way is long
Over the hills to Nowhere.

The yellow coach — how grand it seemed —
The horses champed, and their trappings gleamed,
And over all the sunlight streamed.



"O THERE'S MANY A TURN AND THE WAY IS LONG."

We clambered in with laugh and shout,
When once inside we nestled about,
Till at the hills we all got out ;

Picking the flowers that grew by the way,
Watching the birds and squirrels at play,
These were the joys of that coaching day.

The winds are soft, the skies are fair,
In nature's heart is no despair,
For bud and bloom are everywhere ;
So hurry along with rattle and song,
The wheels are stout, the axles strong,
O there's many a turn and the way is long
Over the hills to Nowhere.

The peaceful herds of grazing kine,
The valleys green and the river's shine,
The distant hills in a martial line,

The changing earth and firmament ;
These were the scenes that came and went
Whenever the roadway sudden bent.

It was a grand kaleidoscope
Of river, field, and mountain slope,
With which our sense could feebly cope.

The winds are soft, the skies are fair,
In nature's heart is no despair,
For bud and bloom are everywhere ;



"THE OLD WATERIN' TROUGH."

So hurry along with rattle and song,
The wheels are stout, the axles strong,
O there's many a turn and the way is long
Over the hills to Nowhere.

THE OLE WATERIN' TROUGH.

Beside the roadway in a shady nook,
Its sparklin' water from a mountain brook,
The ole trough stands; here steeds o' low degree
May slake their thirst with those of pedigree,
For at this bar the drinks ter all are free.

COMPENSATION.

Farmin' is hard, but I hev alluz felt
It brung me near ter nater an' her ways,
An' in the joy o' sunny, smilin' days,
My troubles alluz seem ter kinder melt.

IMPERFECTION.

Why weren't we humans made without a flaw,
Jest like the lily or the apple blow?
Perhaps it is a part o' nater's law
That perfect things from imperfection grow.

CHANGE.

In nater all things travel round an' round,
From seed ter fruit, an' then inter the ground.
Jest as the water in the great sea goes
From cloud ter earth, an' then ter ocean flows.

POKIN' ROUND.

Pokin' round in ferns an' mosses
Like a hop-toad or a snail
Kinder seems ter lighten crosses
Where my heart would elsewise fail.



"FORSAKEN."

PLAIN SPEAKIN'.

A lie's a lie, although we say o' late
The person will sometimes prevaricate ;
An' slander's pison, in life's every walk,
Although we say the person likes ter talk.

SLEEPIN' IN THE BARN.

There ain't much comfort in a springy bed
Where it will always give a trifle more,
An' yer must ev'ry minute hev a dread
That it will bust an' spill yer on the floor.

The real ole-fashioned cord bed is my ch'ice,
There I can feel that I hev come ter stay,
But if yer really want for somethin' nice
Jest take a turn upon a mow o' hay.

There yer can feel there's somethin' under yer,
An' it will cuddle yer jest like a ma,
An' ef the winders are not off too fur
Yer see the sky an' here an' there a star.

Then from the stable comes the pleasant sound
Of hosses chawin' on their oats an' hay ;
The sniffin' o' the watchdog on his round,
An' twit'rin' swallows jest above the bay.

An' there's a kind o' somethin' in the hay
That soothes the sense an' leads the soul ter dreams,
An' almost 'fore yer think yer on the way
The mornin' sunlight through the winder streams.

THE HARVEST FEAST.

A long, low kitchen where the rafters show,
With burnished andirons where the embers glow,
A groaning board, keen appetites to stay,
A row of faces, grave or bright and gay.

COURAGE.

With adamantine nerves and heart like stone,
With courage blazoned on its war-scarred shield,
The life that wins success must stand alone,
And strive from dawn till dark, and never yield.

IF WE BUT KNEW.

The voice of God that thunders in the wave
And is so terrible in wind and storm,
If we but saw our loved ones' radiant form,
Would seem all sweetness by the new made grave.

A SPARK.

Man's thought is but a segment of the arc
That spans infinity;
So when he sees the whole how like a spark
His little light will be!

— — —

GITTIN' HUM.

There air some mighty purty sights
Ter see upon a farm,
An' there ain't nothin' in the town
Ter my idee ter charm
Yer like them humly kentry scenes,
With all their quiet ways,
Instead o' everything agog,
An' everything ablaze.

I went down ter the city once
Ter see what I could see,
An' got alfred lonesome like
An' blue as I could be;
I didn't see a bit o' grass,
Or any kind o' land,
Or anything but bricks and stun
An' houses built so grand

You'd hardly dast ter look at 'em,
An' made so tarnal high
You'd kinder have ter hold yer breath
Whenever yer went by.

The folks all looked so worried like,
An' never stop ter talk,
An' don't say nuthin' 'bout the craps,
An' gallup when they walk.

The furniture is all so soft,
Made out o' plush an' hair,
It kinder seemed ter say ter yer,
Set down on me with care.
I didn't set down good an' hard
The whole time I wuz there —
I tell yer what, I longed sometimes
Fur my ole straight-backed chair.

My cousins were so tarnal p'lite
An' made so many bones
'Bout hevin' me come down ter town,
An' called me Mr. Jones,
An' axed sech funny questions, too,
They made me want ter run;
I'd gi'n a V ter heard um say,
"How be yer, Jonathan?"

I shook the dust off o' my feet
When I had stayed a week,
An' got out o' that Babylon,
Where everything wuz Greek,
An' homes were kept so mighty fine
You'd think um made fur kings,
With beds that wouldn't let yer sleep
For fear you'd bust their springs.

When I got hum 'twuz harvest time,
An' there wuz golden corn
A-standin' waitin' in the shocks,
An' mother's dinner horn
Came ringin' cheery down the road;
It sounded mighty sweet,
It seemed ter say, "Cum hum, ole man,
An' git somethin' ter eat."

An' there wuz cattle in the fields,
An' punkins on the vines,
An' flamin' maples in the woods
Among the spruce and pines.



"AN' THERE WUZ CATTLE IN THE FIELDS."

An' squirrels jumped from limb ter limb
Where there wuz nuts ter spare,
An' autumn's haze wuz on the hills,
An' peace wuz in the air.

An' when I saw our little hum
A-nestlin' in the trees,
Jest in the sunshine an' the shade
With jest a bit o' breeze;
I'll 'low my heart swelled up a bit
An' kep' a-swellin' more,
Until it fairly bust itself
With Hannah at the door.

An' when she hugged me roun' the neck,
An' kissed me on the cheek,
An' said, "How be yer, Jonathan?"
I swow, I couldn't speak,—
'Twuz worth a year o' city life,
An' more than kingdom come;
'Bout all the fun o' goin' off
Is jest a-gittin' hum.

DANGLIN'.

Danglin' yer feet jest off a rustic bridge,
Tossin' bright pebbles down inter the brook,
Watchin' the fishes, longin' for a hook,
Not tumblin' in, but jest upon the edge.



"I WENT DOWN TER THE CITY ONCE."



"A RUSTIC BRIDGE."

TO AN OLD PINE.

Dark silent pine, that standest here so grim,
What mystery dost hang upon thy form,
Of life and death, of sunny days, and storm
Of icebound months, in years that now are dim?

THE NOBLEST LIVES.

The noblest lives are reared in poverty,
Where early struggles teach the soul to see
That life is strife, and it is nature's plan
That in the very struggling is the man.

AN OLE TIME THANKSGIVING DAY.

There ain't no other holiday
That sets my heart aglow,
That turns my feelin's inside out,
An' stirs me all up so;

For I have seen a lot o' um,
An' they are jest as bright,
An' stand out full as clear ter me
As this 'ere one ter night.

But in the ones we hed way back
We went in more for fun,
An' didn't try so much for style
As in this modern one.

Don't I remember those times well,
 Especially one day —
 How all the leetle memories
 Like fire light round it play!
 Jest let me sketch it for you now. —
 'Twuz fifty year ago,
 An' there are forty-nine between,
 A-standin' in a row.



"THANKSGIVIN' IN THE DISTANCE."

Pale dawned the mornin' hung with mist,
The sun a-peepin' through
A splendid arch o' somber gray
With jest a bit o' blue.

But as the hours drew on ter noon
The azure turned ter gray,
An' leetle snowflakes filled the air —
It alluz snows that day.

The dinner hour wuz set for two,
When folks began ter come,
How grandpa 'n' grandma hurried round
An' how the tongues did hum!

The uncles, aunts, an' cousins came,
An' all their gals an' boys,
A score o' young folks full o' life
An' eager for its joys.

An' all the leetle children, too,—
A-hevin' heaps o' fun,
A-peekin' roun' an askin' ef
The turkey wasn't done.

Then by an' by we all went out
Inter the kitchen quaint —
With polished walls o' han'some oak
Not covered up with paint.

But with the beams a-showin' through,
Each in its nat'ral wood;
An' queer ole cheers an' cupboards neat
An' fire logs snappin' good.



"QUEER OLE CHEERS AN' CUPBOARDS NEAT."

The table spread with heaps o' things
That caught the young folk's eyes,
The turkey fust, of course, an' then
The plum duff an' the pies.

Big punkin pies an' berry pies
An' pies o' peach an' pear,
An' all the finest kin's o' cake
Hed somehow gotten there.

It makes me hungry now, I vum!
An' though a man is rich
The farmers' livin' beats him clean,
For gold won't buy no sich.

Then grandpa, he would say the grace
An' we young scamps would grin,
An' kind o' chuckle as he did,
An' each would stroke his chin.

Then how the merry jest did fly!
An' how the tongues did go!
The ole folks seemed quite satisfied,
Jest lookin' down the row.

Then each would tell the thing that he
Was truly grateful for,
One little chap would thankful be
Ef he could go ter war.

Then in the evenin' there wuz games,
An' hick'ry nuts an' jokes ;
Snapdragon made a pile o' fun
For big an' leetle folks ;

An' grandpa told us thrillin' tales ·
About King Philip's braves,
An' burnin' towns, an' scalpin' folks,
An' findin' Injuns' graves.

We never knew how 'twuz the clock
Got round that night so late,
But there it wuz, a-pintin' twelve
Afore we thought 'twuz eight.

How hard it was ter say good-by
Ter all that warmth an' cheer,
An' know 'Thanksgivin' day hed past
Until another year!

A ROOSTER.

How proud the rooster stalks along the lane,
Stepping from right to left in high disdain ;
Like many a man he tries to make a show
With gaudy crest, and loud and frequent crow.

LEETLE LOVES.

It ain't so much great thunder showers o' love
We humans crave, as leetle drops like dew,
That silent, unseen, through the ether move,
An' ev'ry evenin' faintin' hearts renew.

WINTER MUSIC.

The sweetest winter music ter my ear
Is not the harmony o' mighty sound,
It is the silver tinkle underground
O' leetle streams that hide away in fear.



"SILVER TINKLE UNDERGROUND."

MAKE FRIENDS.

Make not an enemy o' man or beast
When thou art strong, an' master o' the feast;
For times may come through providence o' God
When thou shalt serve and they will hold the rod.

REMEMBRANCE.

Do human lives such sweet remembrance give
As do the leaves, when they have ceased to live?
So sweet the scent of dead leaves on the mold
We deem their life not dearly hath been sold.

CONSOLATION IN DECEMBER.

Autumnal days have fully passed,
And chill December's stinging blast
Has blown its icy breath;
The fallen leaf, the faded flower,
The somber fields, the skies that lower,
All mourn the summer's death.

And now the wild wind, in its mirth,
Sweeps o'er the sorrow-stricken earth
And scours each hill and dale,
While silently the falling snow
Sifts down upon the fields below
And spreads its fleecy veil.

But keep thy heart,—autumnal hopes
Have not been buried on these slopes
To sleep for aye and aye;
The leafy bowers, the happy birds,
The verdant fields, the lowing herds,
Will all come back in May.

In dark December look to spring
And learn to hear the robin sing
Upon the unbuilt nest;
In sorrow teach thy lips to say,—
I know this pain will pass away,
And I shall see 'twas best.

SONG OF THE WOODSMAN.

I hie me away to the forest old
On a winter's morn when the air is cold
And the white snow gleams in the morning sun
And every twig is a diamond;
The trees are bending beneath the snow
That falls in showers as the cold winds blow,
A heavy load bears the evergreen
And scarce a leaf of the laurel is seen.

I take my stand by the lordly tree
That now hath stood full a century
And raised on high its majestic form
In the summer's breeze and the winter's storm;

I measure it with a woodsman's eye,
Its towering form 'gainst the winter sky,
And choose the spot where the tree must fall
With a deafening crash, at the woodsman's call.

With a steady stroke at the tallest oak
The forest ever grows,
I'll lay it low in the gleaming snow
To music of my blows;
Then gayly sing while the woodlands ring
With echoes of the ax;
Though the trees are tall I'll conquer them all
And break their sturdy backs.



"A HEAVY LOAD BEARS THE EVERGREEN."

The bright ax gleams as it goes up slow
And then it falls with a ringing blow ;
The sharp blade sinks in the tender sap,
And falling chips leave a bleeding gap,
And wide and deep grows the woodsman's cut
As he hews away at the royal butt,
And one by one through the yearly rings
The bright ax sinks while he gayly sings.

And soon the woodsman with cautious eye
Will view the top in the steel-blue sky
To see if the tree has begun to lean,
Or if a stir in its twigs is seen ;
Then comes a quake through the noble tree,
As though it writhed at its destiny,
And then a creak as the strong wood breaks,
And the monarch falls and the firm earth shakes.

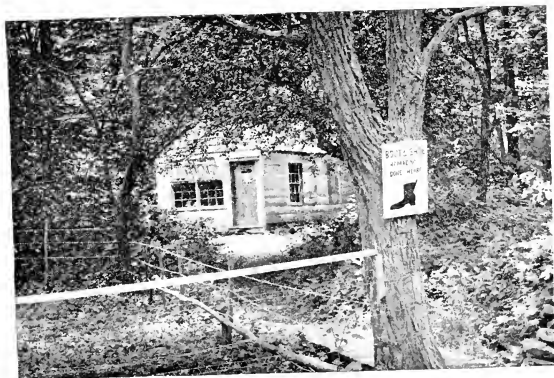
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The forest ever grows,
I'll lay it low in the gleaming snow
To music of my blows ;
Then gayly sing while the woodlands ring
With echoes of the ax ;
Though the trees are tall I'll conquer them all
And break their sturdy backs.

KEEP A-PEGGIN'.

Yis! keep a-peggin', don't git riled or blue;
Thy heart ter duty as the sun keep true;
Then all the changin' winds an' waves o' fate
Will buoy thee up, and help to make thee great.

GLEANING FROM OTHERS.

Each man yer meet, git all his new idees,
His hard-gained wisdom, and the truth he sees,
His noblest traits an' all that he has shown
That is o' worth an' shape um for yer own.



"KEEP A-PEGGIN'."

CROW LINE.

Crow line is jest about the only way
Ter git through life, for ef yer stop ter play
An' fuss about, the Lord won't stop the sun
An' you'll git left afore the journey's done.

WATER'S WINE.

Some poets sing o' foreign wines, an' tell
About the vintage from across the sea;
But clear cold water is the stuff for me
Out o' the northeast corner o' our well.

YOUNGSTERS.

How these green leaves a-growin' by the bars
Hev brung me back ter days when I's a boy,
A-pickin' youngsters an' a-havin' joy,
A fairly treadin' round upon the stars.

BILLY' SAP.

You boys all know how in the airy spring —
Wal, say about the time the bluebird comes —
How 'tis the groun' begins ter thaw an' freeze
Along the sunny slopes beside the woods,

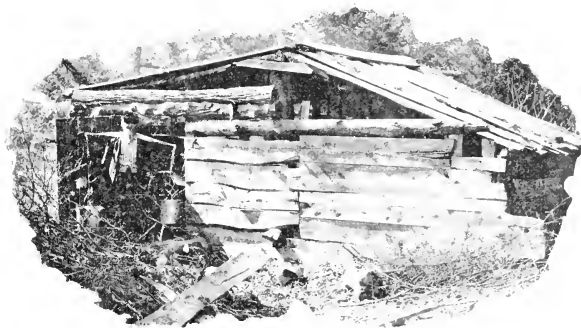
An' how the sap goes creepin' up by day
Inter the limbs an' shoots upon the trees,
An' how the cold at night will send it back
Agin a-racin' down into the roots
Ter keep all snug an' warm till mornin' comes;
The snow ain't gone 'cept here an' there a bit
Upon the hills that look all bare an' burnt —
Wal, jest about this time it gits ter look
Like sugarin'. So when the wind comes right,
An' it will freeze by night an' thaw by day,
Then boys look out fur jest a rush o' sap.
'Tis then we git the spouts an' buckets out,
An' set the camp. I tell you what, 'tis fun



"THE SNOW AIN'T GONE 'CEPT HERE AN' THERE A BIT."

This tappin' trees, sendin' the gleamin' bit
Inter the wood, seein' the shavin's creep
Out on the steel, an' fall upon the snow,
Wet with the lifeblood o' the mighty tree;
An' then ter see the sap come spurtin' out
As bright an' sparklin' as the mornin' dew,
An' then ter hear it drop inter the pail
As stiddy as an old-time wooden clock —
A kinder sayin', drink, drink, drink.
When sap has been a-runnin' for a week
Right smart — that is, it does not run much nights —
The storage tubs an' pans git brimmin' full
An' runnin' over, too, an' then the boys
Go up ter camp ter bile the sap at night,
They git a peck o' apples from the bin,
Some but'nuts an' some ches'nuts from upstairs,
An' then they start up to the sugarhouse.
The moon is mebbe three hours high by then
An' jest a-smilin' out her purtiest,
Turnin' the snow to sparklin' diamonds
An' makin' gloomy shadows 'hind the trees.
The sugarhouse looks cheerfuller than home
With its great fire a-glowin' in the arch,
An' steam a-streamin' out through every crack.
Wal, fust they set ter work ter fill the pan
An' git the fire to goin' goed an' hot,
An' then they spread some blankets on the floor
Before the glowin' arch where it is warm,
An' set down for a feast an' story tell,
An' sech tales as them country boys can tell!
Stories of Injun fightin' on the plains,

An' huntin' grizzlies on the mountain wilds,
An' trackin' antelopes across the snow,
With jungle tales an' stories o' the East,
Of buried treasures in the mountain side,
An' pirate raids upon the open sea,
An' all the while the fitful fire light gleams
An' dances in the arch, sendin' its glow
Far out inter the gloom, then sinkin' low
Leaves all the scene in dark, mysterious shade,
An' ev'ry now an' then the howlin' wind
Shrieks in the trees like witches ridin' by,
Or makes the big old maple limbs ter squeak
An' groan; then, in some sudden lull, the crust
Will crack an' snap like ter the sharp report
O' that dread rifle that the red man bears,
An' owls with hideous hoots fill up the gaps.

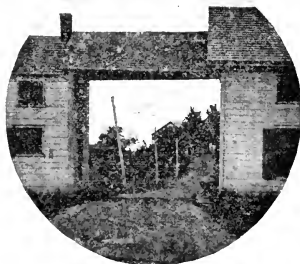


AT THE SUGARHOUSE.

An' as each tale grows skeerier than the last
The boys draw nearer to the cheerful fire
An' peer inter the gloom with frightened eyes;
An' so they pass the cold un'arthly night
A-chankin' apples an' a-spinnin' yarns,
An' skeerin' one another nigh ter death,
Until the gleamin' stars begin ter fade,
An' in the east there comes a yarler streak.
An' then they pour the sirup in a tub,
Then hitch it tight upon the ole hand sled,
An' draw it home jest as the breakin' day
Begins ter chase the shadows o'er the snow.

SOUL-FODDER.

It ain't so much the things we do or see
That is the essence o' the verb "ter be";
It is the truth we feel, the love we give,
That makes a human bein' truly live.



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